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2014 Vermont Teacher of the Year Finalists Named

MONTPELIER – Vermont Secretary of Education Armando Vilaseca has announced that two middle school teachers and one high school teacher have been selected as the state finalists for the prestigious title of 2014 Vermont Teacher of the Year. This year, 49 educators were nominated to the Vermont Teacher of the Year Program.

The 2014 finalists are Katy Farber, 6th grade teacher at Rumney Memorial School in Middlesex; Luke Foley, grades 9-12 STAR program teacher at Northfield Middle High School in Northfield; and Valerie Gasco, grades 6-8 special education teacher at Riverside Middle School in Springfield.

"These three finalists are symbolic of the many outstanding teachers we have working in our state," said Armando Vilaseca, Secretary of Education. "I would be proud to have them represent all Vermont educators on the national platform."

Five semi-finalists underwent an intensive selection process consisting of a professional portfolio review, panel interviews, and an oral presentation to the Vermont State Board of Education. Classroom visits (the final stage of the selection process) are scheduled for early-October.

"The State Board of Education was pleased to hear from the candidates at its August 20th meeting," said Board Chair Stephan Morse. "They are all indicative of the high caliber of educators in Vermont's schools."

When asked what she advocates for, Katy Farber said, "As a teacher I have seen the power of leadership, service learning, and authentic, integrated learning experiences, and believe schools must become more humane, flexible, community based and creative to meet the diverse needs of students and to retain great teachers."

When asked about his education philosophy, Luke Foley said, "I look to cultivate a dynamic and engaging curriculum that partners an experiential outdoor education model with the community-building components of service learning. My students recognize that their academic experience is not only about learning about themselves, but also learning about what they have to offer the world around them."

When asked what education looks like, Valerie Gasco said, "Education is really about connections and partnerships among students, parents, business leaders, religious and social service organizations, government, and schools. Our kids need to know that we all understand their talents and challenges, and believe that they can persevere and succeed."

Jay Hoffman, an education technology teacher at Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School in South Burlington, is Vermont's current Teacher of the Year. "Enjoy the celebration, it goes fast. Then roll up your sleeves, find your voice, and become the advocate, the inspiration you always dreamed of becoming," said Hoffman when asked what advice he would give the next Teacher of the Year. "It is truly your turn to make a difference."

The 2014 Vermont Teacher of the Year will be announced at the October 15th State Board of Education meeting.

For more information about the Vermont Teacher of the Year program, go to:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/awards/toy.html>.

For more information about the State Board of Education, go to:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

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